

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED



COR - 0655

30 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Nicholas Golovin, Director, Technical Operations  
Division, ARPA.

1. We have recently received the following quoted message from BMD:

"On 12 October, Messrs Richard S. Cesaro, Nathan W. Snyder and A. G. Noren, all of ARPA, met with AFBMD representatives to discuss an engineering payload for the DISCOVERER Program. The following experiments were proposed:

1. Advanced auxiliary power supplies. Evaluate long life capability of advanced (nuclear) units.
2. Navigation payload. Modified transit payload to be evaluated to obtain long-life data.
3. Communication relay experiment. Obtain reliability data on various satellite-borne communication payloads.
4. Nuclear detection component experiment. Determine radiation levels and spatial-seasonal distribution of background radiation.
5. Flasher experiment. Determine feasibility of tracking a satellite by optical means, using a flashing light on the satellite.

"The ARPA representatives want to place all five of these experiments concurrently on a single AGENA vehicle, and would like to plan the launching for February 1960.

"The AFBMD representatives centered their discussion around the following points:

- A. The February 1960 date is impractical.
- B. Re-consideration should be given to the nature of the payload. Is the 5-in-1 approach really desirable? Is it prudent to plan for only 1 launching?

C. We have scheduling problems. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to fit this launching into the present DISCOVERER series.

D. What are ARPA's plans for supplying a THOR and an AGENA for this work?

"In answer to the last question it was clearly ARPA's intent to take over one of the THOR-AGENA vehicles in the current 29 vehicle series. In light of this response, we are asking you to take a top-level look at the situation and to handle any further conferences on this matter until the THOR-AGENA allocation question is resolved to your satisfaction.

2. I assume from my talks with Bill Godall that any remarks by the Comaro team regarding ARPA's intent were either misunderstood by BMD or if properly understood were unauthorized by ARPA. However, I would appreciate a note from you which I hope will confirm my assumption and define ARPA's intentions as negative regarding the use of any of the current 29 vehicle series for the engineering payload.

12/  
[Redacted]  
Chief, Development Branch  
DPD-DD/P

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DB/DPD-DD/P: [Redacted]

Distribution:

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November 4, 1959

TRIP REPORT  
Project C - VAFB 11/1/59



At the request of [redacted] I visited VAFB on the evening of 1 November 1959 to observe the final assembly of the configuration scheduled for flight on 3 November 1959.

Although the LMSD crew had arrived only shortly before I did, they seemed very tired, almost groggy. I do not know whether this was an aftermath of excessive work at Palo Alto or not but, as previously observed, the loading crew is not split into shifts but works around the clock as necessary. On this occasion it was well after two in the morning before they were through.

While the building was cleaner than on a previous visit, there was still the same laxness in supervision. It is difficult to determine whether LMSD has three people in charge or none. But certainly there is no one individual who personally checks or reviews each operation.

The check off sheet is partly printed and partly in pencil but wasn't complete as we discovered after the nose cone was completely assembled to and including the parachute before someone (G.E.) remembered an operation that required its complete disassembly.

The air pressure test of the bucket revealed many leaks at bolts, connectors, etc. Most of these were sealed with epoxy, but some I suspect went uncorrected because of the method of inspection.

Frequently the question, "Does anyone remember what we did last time" was asked. With the exception of the ITTEK representative, who seemed to have a firm grip on his problems, there was no system for filing the parts needed for assembly. Each item had to be searched for or the person who had cached it found. In some instances it was necessary to go "next door" for a specific bolt or nut.

Considerably more light is used when handling film than I would like to see but with the general lack of discipline I doubt if the situation can be improved without mutiny. In fact one of the supervisors turned on the ceiling lights once towards the end by mistake.

After final assembly the camera would not operate. Analysis indicated that an electrical connector in the interior had not been mated. After some considerable struggle, the connection was made without another disassembly.